



FACT SHEET

BLM-MONTANA/DAKOTAS

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Miles City Resource Management Plan (RMP) Revision

FACT SHEET: Understanding the Alternatives

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The BLM has studied existing conditions and information, considered public comments received from scoping and met with cooperating agencies and resource advisory council members to determine how best to develop alternatives to address the issues, respond to the management opportunities and how to change resource conditions where appropriate.

The information below provides a summary of the types of management actions considered under “Management Common to All Alternatives” and for each specific alternative. All acres described in this handout are on BLM-administered surface or minerals.

Management Common to All Alternatives

- Approximately 432,000 acres are unavailable for oil and gas leasing in the planning area.
- Lands acquired in the planning area are managed the same as “like adjacent lands”.
- There are 13 areas that continue to be managed as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).
- Acquired Lands with Wilderness Characteristics in the Terry Badlands Wilderness Study Area (WSA) are managed the same as the WSA.
- BLM follows the *Record of Decision for Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management*.

Alternative A

Alternative A, the “No Action Alternative,” continues current management of resources within the planning area under the existing plans.

- Oil and gas leasing is offered on 5.4 million acres.
- There are no priority or restoration habitats identified for the management of Greater Sage-Grouse.
- ACECs: 16 ACECs encompass 51,000 acres.
- Lands with wilderness characteristics: the “Devil’s Common Creek Common Area” (5,236 acres), has no actions specifically identified for protection.
- Livestock grazing is allowed on 2.7 million acres and prohibited on 240 acres.

Alternative B

Alternative B emphasizes conservation of physical, biological, heritage, and visual resources with constraints on resource uses.

- Oil and gas leasing is offered on 3.3 million acres (61% of the planning area) and not offered on 2.1 million acres (39% of the planning area).
- A Greater Sage-Grouse Protection Priority ACEC is proposed on 1.1 million acres. There are two “Restoration Areas” (260,000 acres) where management is restricted to maintain sage-grouse habitat.
- ACECs: 22 areas encompass 1,350,000 acres.

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- Protection of lands with wilderness characteristics: the Devil's Creek Common Area (5,236 acres), is a priority over other multiple uses. For example, oil and gas leasing is allowed with no surface occupancy.
- Livestock grazing (except sheep and goats) is allowed on 2.5 million acres and not allowed on 210,000 acres. Domestic sheep and goat grazing is allowed on 2.1 million acres and not allowed on 390,000 acres.

Alternative C

Alternative C emphasizes resource use opportunities and local economies within the planning area and reduces constraints on resource uses.

- Oil and gas leasing is offered on 5.4 million acres.
- There are three Greater Sage-Grouse Protection Priority Areas (597,000 acres) and two Restoration Areas (115,000 acres) where management is restricted to maintain Greater Sage-Grouse habitat.
- ACECs: 21 areas encompass 82,000 acres.
- Management actions are restricted in lands with wilderness characteristics: the Devil's Creek Common Area (5,236 acres). For example, the area is managed per Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class II.
- Except for domestic sheep and goats, livestock grazing is allowed on 2.5 million acres. Sheep and goats are not allowed to graze on 8,300 acres.

Alternative D

Alternative D provides the widest range of uses, emphasizing recreation, mineral and energy development.

- Oil and gas leasing is offered on 5.4 million acres of federal mineral estate.
- There are two Greater Sage-Grouse Protection Priority Areas (485,000 acres) and two Restoration Areas (79,000 acres) where management is restricted to maintain Greater Sage-Grouse habitat.
- ACECs: 21 areas encompass 82,000 acres.
- Management actions are restricted on lands with wilderness characteristics: the Devil's Creek Common Area (5,236 acres). For example, the area is managed per VRM Class II.
- Livestock grazing is allowed on 2.7 million acres and prohibited on 3,100 acres.

Alternative E

Alternative E represents the BLM's "Preferred Alternative" at this stage of the process. The preferred alternative seeks to balance resource protection with resource production. This is done with consideration for the economic reliance and "way of life" that local communities have in relation to public lands.

Important resource values are protected by constraining resource uses in areas where conflicts exist such as by limiting disturbance in Greater Sage-Grouse priority habitat areas. A variety of recreational opportunities, including OHV use, are provided across the planning area.

The preferred alternative generally increases conservation of physical, biological, heritage and visual resources compared to current management.

- Oil and gas leasing is offered on 5.4 million acres.
- There are three Greater Sage-Grouse Protection Priority Areas (792,000 acres) and four Restoration Areas (109,000 acres) where management is restricted to maintain Greater Sage-Grouse habitat.
- ACECs: 21 areas encompass 64,600 acres.
- Management actions are restricted in lands with wilderness characteristics: the Devil's Creek Common Area (5,236 acres). For example, oil and gas is managed with controlled surface use.
- Livestock grazing is allowed on 2.7 million acres and prohibited on 3,125 acres.